

REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

July 28, 2004

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Snodgrass, Commissioners Allen, Dunn, Parnell, Querry

STAFF PRESENT: Terry Marpert, Dianna Broadie, Jeff Churchill, Sarah Stiteler, Lori Peckol, Erika Vandenbrande, Redmond Planning Department; Jim Charlier, Consultant

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Snodgrass in the Public Safety Building Council Chambers.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was revised to have Item 6 follow Item 4(b), and the revised agenda was approved by acclamation.

ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE – None

PUBLIC HEARING AND STUDY SESSION

A. Regional Planning and Annexation Element

Chair Snodgrass declared the public hearing for the Regional Planning and Annexation Element open.

Ms. Judy Willman, 12323 - 209th Avenue NE, said she was very happy to see Policy PR-32 that supports the continued minimal development of the Redmond watershed preserve. She commended the Commission for responding to the concerns of the Redmond-area horse community, for keeping the area to the east of Redmond rural, and for the trail preservation language. Much of what is included in the proposed Comprehensive Plan is very promising. However, the policy relating to the development of an equestrian district gives no consideration to working with Bridle View, an area in a potential annexation situation. The language of the policy is unclear and could be interpreted to mean it is aimed at developing an equestrian district in the current rural area east of Redmond, something that is already done; or it could be interpreted to mean it is aimed at developing equestrian district policies in potential future annexation areas. If the latter is the case, stronger language is needed with regard to what is expected to happen. There should be guidelines for when the equestrian policies will be worked on. If there is no mandated timeframe involved, nothing will happen.

Senior Planner Dianna Broadie introduced intern Jeff Churchill to give the staff presentation. Mr. Churchill said the major themes in the proposed Annexation and Regional Planning Element include: 1) participate in collaborative regional planning with neighboring jurisdictions and regional bodies; 2) annex the remaining annexation area in a logical, orderly fashion using incentives; and 3) support the preservation of the Urban Growth Area (UGA) line as it stands currently. The significant changes in the proposed element include: 1) deletion of obsolete terminology and policies; 2) right-of-way issues in annexation addressed in more detail; 3) emphasis on annexing the remaining Potential Annexation Area (PAA); 4) consideration of the equestrian lifestyle around Redmond; and 5) updates to the style resulting in a shorter document.

Focusing on the terminology and policy deletions, Mr. Churchill said the “impact and planning area” concept has run its course. The focus instead is on cooperative regional planning. The “10/20 Year Service Area” concept is also outdated, and in the proposed element Redmond extends utilities only to annexed areas and areas served by prior agreement. The current element includes a great deal of language about how to establish the PAA, and since the PAA has been set, the language is no longer needed. Some redundant policies having to do with capital facilities and the provision of utilities have been pulled.

The Commissioners were reminded that the existing policy deals only with including or excluding roads and intersections when working on annexations. The new policy ensures that all utility and road issues, including arterials and bridges, are addressed prior to annexation. There is in the proposed element an increased emphasis on annexation. The policies encourage annexation as soon as practicable. Certain incentives are included, such as the waiving of application fees, requiring annexation in order to access city utilities, and involving future potential residents in the neighborhood planning process.

The equestrian lifestyle policy reinforces the commitment of the city to the current UGA, advocates cooperation in creating an equestrian district in King County, and highlights the importance of having a well-maintained system of linked trails suitable for equestrians.

Turning to the Parks, Recreation and Arts Element, Senior Planner Sarah Stiteler said the document highlights Redmond’s beautiful natural setting and its commitment to maintaining it. The proposed element builds on the strengths of the current element and recognizes the city’s tradition of high-quality parks, trails, open space and arts programs, and recommends the development of “special places” and the importance of linkages between them.

Ms. Stiteler said there is a new section that highlights special features policies, which are natural areas that are unique and special to Redmond; they include Lake Sammamish, the Sammamish River, the Burlington Northern trail and Marymoor Park. There is an emphasis on access to shoreline areas. The element also recognizes an increased emphasis on the arts and recommends early involvement in the development review

process, and recommends the development of gathering places and stronger identification of linkages. It also acknowledges the trail system as having a role in providing non-motorized transportation, encourages the development of smaller, local parks within neighborhoods, promotes the concept and use of the Sammamish River as a "Blue Trail," and proposes consideration of concessions within the parks.

The next steps will involve resolving issues and crafting a recommendation to forward to the City Council.

There were no additional members of the public wishing to testify regarding the Regional Planning and Annexation Element. Chair Snodgrass declared the public hearing closed.

Chair Snodgrass declared the public hearing for the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Arts open.

Mr. Robert Young, Executive Director of the Lake Washington Soccer Association, 12525 Willows Road, Kirkland, indicated his support for the proposed changes to the element. He said his organization has been involved in running parks for 22 years, including the King County park in the north part of Redmond called Sixty Acres. A 125-acre parcel on the other side of the river has recently been acquired, and negotiations are under way with the county for a property swap in another location for development into additional park space. The Council is talking about a bond issue for parks and increased taxes. The city should always welcome opportunities to engage in public/private partnerships.

Commissioner Parnell noted that during the development of the proposed plan as it relates to the Grass Lawn park, concerns were raised with regard to parking in the adjacent neighborhoods and littering. Mr. Young was asked if the Lake Washington Soccer Association has rules in place for activities that occur off the field. Mr. Young said the referees have charge of the games from the time they show up on the field. Disciplinary action can be taken both on the game field and off. If a parent observes unacceptable behavior, there is a process in place for documenting the incident with the organization. A disciplinary/ethics committee is established for reviewing complaints and making a determination.

There were no additional members of the public wishing to testify regarding the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Arts Element. Chair Snodgrass declared the public hearing closed.

The study session on the Regional Planning and Annexation Element began with Chair Snodgrass asking staff to comment on the issues raised by Ms. Willman relative to Bridle View as a PAA and the intent of the city to have an urban equestrian district created inside the UGA. Ms. Broadie said the Bridle View area is within the current PAA, but there have been communications from the horse-keeping neighborhood that they would rather be affiliated with Kirkland. Because the issue with regard to which city's PAA the

area should be included remains open, staff determined that there should be no specific reference in the element.

Working from the issues list, Commissioner Parnell said his intent was to make sure residents in areas to be annexed are treated as Redmond citizens prior to annexation insofar as receiving notices of land use actions is concerned. Ms. Broadie answered that such notices are sent to all property owners within 500 feet, which in most cases would include all properties in the PAAs.

Commissioner Dunn suggested that there would be an advantage in making the local residents want to be annexed into Redmond by allowing them to participate in the organization. Ms. Broadie informed the Commission that the city cannot proactively encourage the annexation of any area into the city. The city must limit its actions to the dissemination of accurate facts.

With regard to A-13, Commissioner Allen stressed the need to stay the course of the policy that growth should pay for growth. She commented that it is important that the proposed policy will not have a negative impact on that overarching city policy.

Commissioner Query indicated that the proposed revision to A-7 adequately captures the concerns she raised with regard to the policy. She noted that "...notification of others..." should read "...notification to others...."

With regard to removing the map of the city's annexation history and related information from the element, there was agreement to leave them in.

Ms. Broadie said no substantive changes were made to the language of A-20. The proposed revision merely clarifies the nexus between keeping a development in the city and developing an area.

Commissioner Parnell asked if llamas, burros and donkeys are included in the definition for equestrian. Ms. Broadie said there is no definition for equestrian included in the document.

Motion to adopt and forward to the City Council the proposed Regional Planning and Annexation Element for the Comprehensive Plan as revised was made by Commissioner Allen. Second was by Commissioner Query and the motion carried unanimously.

Turning to the issues list for the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Arts Element, Commissioner Parnell suggested that pea patches constitute a special type of park and as such should be called out separately in the same way soccer fields and baseball fields are.

Commissioner Query suggested that the issue is one that should be put to the Parks Board instead of the Planning Commission.

Ms. Stiteler said there are existing policies that relate to pea patches; they are contained in the Community Character Element. The issue is whether or not there should be additional policy in the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Arts Element that also addresses or encourages pea patches as a use within parks.

It was agreed to keep the topic on the issues list.

Commissioner Dunn said she was surprised to see the section on special features did not include Farril-McWhirter Park as a natural or historical resource. Ms. Stiteler allowed that there are a number of special areas in Redmond. She said in developing the list she was focused specifically on those things that are part of the natural environment. Commissioner Dunn asked to have adding the park to the list added to the list of issues to discuss.

Commissioner Dunn also noted that at one point the Commission talked about having standards for things such as indoor meeting space, facilities and the like. Ms. Stiteler said the section as written provides a broad overview of the Council-adopted standards for park areas. She said the section could include a reference to the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Arts Element regarding other adopted standards, such as those for art.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Dunn, Commissioner Query said the Parks Board held formal public hearings around the adoption of the PRO plan. Commissioner Dunn noted that for each section under review by the Commission, there are specific facilities investments that need to be made; the investments are backed up by functional plans. Whole sections of the Transportation Element are taken up with definitions of what should be in the financial plan for the element. The same is not included in either the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Arts Element or the Capital Facilities Element. She suggested that there should be policy included that directs the city to create the PRO plan with a list of specific elements.

It was agreed that the issue should be added to the list for additional discussion.

Chair Snodgrass advised against including levels of service for parks and art. He noted that the Council has already adopted certain levels of service, and if they are specifically called out in the element, every time the Council acts to change those levels of service there will be a need to change the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Query concurred but suggested that the wording directing the city to focus on those areas that are deficient should be retained in the element.

There was agreement to revise the language of PR-11 to read “Encourage the development of smaller, local parks in locations throughout the city, also support efforts by private developments to provide shared open space and the development of pocket or mini parks when feasible.”

There was agreement with the response of staff regarding the issue of meeting part of the need for park space through private recreation space, such as open space established through new development.

On the issue of whether or not there should be a separate policy addressing the interest of the city in having an aquatic center, Commissioner Allen said she would not be opposed to having such a policy given that the plan calls out other specific types of sports and recreation facilities. Ms. Stiteler said Parks staff believes that if the word “aquatic” were included in the list under Policy PR-18 the need would be adequately addressed.

Chair Snodgrass allowed that an aquatic center would cost millions to construct and would require a bond issue. He suggested that it should not be necessary to single out an aquatic center as a priority project. Commissioner Parnell disagreed. He stated that the city may have a specific need in the near future and to provide a separate policy would be a good way of underscoring the need.

It was agreed that there should be additional discussion regarding the list included in Policy PR-18.

With regard to issue 4, Chair Snodgrass suggested that the term “other gathering places” could be added to round out the list. He said he was satisfied with the referenced policies. It was agreed to close the issue.

It was agreed that the issue of the Redmond watershed is adequately covered by the policies.

Commissioner Parnell asked if the Park Board has a particular opinion on the issue of developing policies related to Marymoor Park. Chair Snodgrass said the Park Board is concerned that acquiring the park would result in too much overhead cost. Commissioner Query added that the Park Board would like to have more influence over things that happen at Marymoor Park that affect the city. To that end, some effort should be put into strengthening the policy language.

It was suggested that the policy should be reworded to read “Encourage King County to use Marymoor Park in a manner that is consistent with the city’s vision and character.” Ms. Stiteler said staff and many residents of Redmond have a number of concerns with the manner in which Marymoor Park is operated. However, the city does not have jurisdiction over the county and must continue to work cooperatively with the county.

It was agreed to ask staff to draft revised wording.

There was a brief discussion about scheduling.

****BREAK****

ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Mr. Donald Marcy, 524 2nd Avenue, Seattle, spoke regarding revisions to the language of Policy TR-41. He noted that staff is proposing to delete "...and consider constraints imposed by financing institutions...." Microsoft had proposed wording that is found in three different Comprehensive Plan policies, specifically TR-55, TR-56 and TR-57. Staff has also proposed eliminating the second bullet point in TR-41. Microsoft proposed a revision to the second bullet point which would provide for some administrative flexibility to allow a parking ratio greater than the maximum if appropriate, language that exists in the current TR-58. Microsoft has tapped the administrative flexibility clause for three different development proposals in the past.

STUDY SESSION

2003-2004 Comprehensive Plan
– Transportation Element

Chair Snodgrass said he met with staff on July 27 to discuss the administrative flexibility requirement. The stated position of staff is the specific language is not necessary because the Community Development Guide provides for more than 3.5 parking spaces per thousand square feet of development in certain circumstances. The existing permitting maximums will not in any way be lowered by eliminating the administrative flexibility language. He said he would concur with the recommendation of staff given that understanding. The language in question could be interpreted to mean that staff or the technical committee could increase parking ratios in exceptional circumstances not governed by the Development Guide, something which would not be appropriate.

Commissioner Allen asked if the Development Guide spells out the specific conditions under which an applicant can achieve additional parking capacity. Ms. Vandenbrande explained that in the general parking requirements the ratio is generally 3.0 per thousand. In the designated Overlake area, the interim parking guidelines allow for up to 3.6 per thousand. In the section regarding the transfer of development rights there is language allowing additional parking spaces to be purchased up to 4.0 per thousand, or potentially greater.

Commissioner Allen asked if the Development Guide sets forth a specific process by which an applicant can apply for an increased parking ratio. Ms. Vandenbrande said there is a maximum ratio allowed, which differs by area. Under the current system, staff must make the argument with each development proposal why the maximum number of parking allowed should be reduced. In the instances where for example, Microsoft sought additional parking, staff relied on the Development Guideline and the Comprehensive Plan guidance, but in the end the maximum allowable ratio was permitted.

Commissioner Parnell asked if satellite parking areas are included in the definition of parking for a building. Ms. Vandenbrande said the satellite parking lot would likely be deemed a separate use such as a parking lot.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Querry, Ms. Vandenbrande said the second bullet point in TR-41 was added to accommodate a desire expressed by Microsoft for more parking spaces to accommodate visitors to their site. Because Microsoft indicated that the language was not meeting their needs, staff concluded that the bullet point should be eliminated.

Commissioner Parnell asked if the total number of parking spaces for a building is determined at the time of development. Ms. Vandenbrande said that is generally true. There have been instances in which buildings constructed with less than the maximum allowable number of parking spaces have sought to add more parking after initial development, but only to the maximum allowed.

Commissioner Dunn wanted to know if the requirement to establish minimum and maximum parking ratios applies in areas where a transportation demand management plan is not required. Ms. Vandenbrande said the parking ratios are established in the Parking Management section, not the Transportation Demand Management section. The provisions apply to all developments.

Commissioner Dunn allowed that there could be businesses with legitimate needs for more parking than the maximum allowed. She asked if there is any process for exceeding the maximum where a business can demonstrate a need. Ms. Vandenbrande said such businesses are more than likely required to have transportation demand management programs in place. The more effective those programs are, the less need there is to accommodate additional parking on site.

Principal Planner Terry Marpert suggested that the issue of parking ratios is adequately addressed in the development regulations. The proposed revision to TR-41 does not introduce any new concept or changes to the minimum or maximum ratios.

Chair Snodgrass noted that the Commission has already taken a position on the issue of the policy language of constraints imposed by financing institutions; that position was to insert the word “consider.” He said any Commissioner wishing to revisit the topic could do so at the next meeting.

Chair Snodgrass allowed that the Commission still had unresolved issues relative to plan-based management, levels of service and concurrency. While there is a general understanding of what level of service is, there is some confusion about how it fits in with a plan-based model. Mr. Marpert said the most recent concurrency policy language was drafted with input from the City Council.

Consultant Jim Charlier explained that staff is proposing a system in which there is a standard that must be met. If the standard is not met, development is either restricted or disallowed. The standard becomes the plan-based measure to ensure that development is proportional to the transportation program development, and level of service becomes an indicator, the means by which the pace of development is deemed to be proportional to the rate of transportation system development. Should the rate of land use development exceed transportation development, the level of service would be out of line with the anticipation.

Chair Snodgrass noted that under the current system, level of service in a transportation district is the only criterion for concurrency. If in any particular district the level of service standard cannot be met, projects cannot be approved. However, under the plan-based approach, level of service is one of several ingredients in the determination of whether or not the adopted goals are being met. Where in any given year the level of service indicator for a particular district may exceed the goal for that area, if satisfactory progress is being made on other elements of the transportation plan, a development halt will not be triggered.

Mr. Charlier said when factors other than level of service are folded into the mix, it becomes possible to take a more global look at the overall system. The Council, staff and everyone has been focused on getting away from a roadway capacity-driven system to an approach that is more balanced by mode. The public wants mobility, and the city will need to have a system that can respond to that demand. The idea is to move toward an approach that will include an annual mobility report card brought before the Council for a decision.

Commissioner Allen asked how under the proposed approach the city will be able to respond to specific geographic concerns. Mr. Charlier said the current system averages the intersection levels of service within specific transportation management districts. That bears no relationship to the way in which traffic flows. The reporting system being recommended has a number of screenlines in it, each of which is reported separately. Evaluation of those screenlines leads readily to being able to explain the overall traffic flow and to being able to say definitively whether or not the system is in balance. There certainly is art involved, but it is legitimate art that is open for all to see. Specific geographic concerns can be addressed by making revisions to the short-term transportation plan (TIP) and the long-term term, the transportation master plan.

Chair Snodgrass suggested that requiring an annual report could prove to be problematic. Mr. Charlier said an annual transportation report card is required in the city of Boulder, Colorado. The report is published by the city once a year, and it has not been found to be onerous. Other jurisdictions utilize a biennial reporting process. The term "level of service" could become synonymous with percent completion, though it would have to be defined that way.

Mr. Marpert said the screenlines could be called volume/capacity objectives in order to better explain what they do. They will not be the level of service standards.

Chair Snodgrass called attention to policies TR-4 and TR-7 and suggested that some of the confusion rests with the fact that the term “level of service” is being used to mean different things. Mr. Charlier concurred and proposed that in TR-4 the term “level of service” should be used; in TR-7 the phrase “modal objectives” should be used instead.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Dunn, Mr. Charlier said when a development comes in there are four types of questions that would get asked under the proposed system, the first of which is whether or not the development is consistent with the land use plan. The second question is focused on whether or not transportation concurrency is being met, and that question is answered by the annual concurrency report card. The third question is whether or not development will pay its fair share, which will only be adequately answered with an updated impact fee schedule. The fourth question is whether or not all required onsite mitigation has been handled. That process is much preferable to the system that is currently in place, especially with regard to allowing development to occur without addressing it in the transportation system.

Commissioner Dunn suggested that more policy direction should be provided with regard to what is meant by “fair share” and growth paying for growth. Mr. Marpert said state law says local jurisdictions cannot impose impact fees that charge 100 percent of the total developer-related costs of development. In the past the notion of fair share has been broadly interpreted. In the case of transportation, about 30 percent of the cost of system improvements is directed to impact fees, between 25 and 30 percent is tied to developer frontage and mitigation, and the rest comes from grants and the like.

Mr. Charlier said systems normally break down because an insufficient amount is collected from the taxpayers, not the developers. Where it is determined that the developer is responsible for 60 percent of the costs, it is usually in not generating the remaining 40 percent from the public that keeps local jurisdictions from being able to keep up. A number of cities have found themselves in a corner with collected developer funds unspent because local matching dollars are not in hand. Cities cannot charge developers the full amount because there is always some percentage of the need that is tied to existing conditions. What is defined as the need often involves character-based investment in addition to capacity-based investment, and that can be controversial. The typical approach is to estimate the transportation program need and to fold in design standards. Redmond is mostly a built-out community and will not need to build a number of lane miles of capacity. At the same time there are a number of character needs, and the question is whether or not development can be charged for those aspects.

Chair Snodgrass allowed that for every project requiring an impact fee the notion of fair share will be a factor. For that reason, there needs to be a Comprehensive Plan policy defining the term.

Commissioner Dunn suggested that the annual report should include a section on financial accountability. The other Commissioners concurred.

Mr. Charlier noted that typically impact fees are tied to a developer's fare share of the system needs. In addition, each project brings with it site-specific needs. The site-specific needs should be funded from mitigation or site integration fees, and the system should be designed such that payments for site-specific needs do not get credited against the system.

It was moved and seconded to extend the meeting beyond 10:00 p.m.; the motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Mr. Marpert reminded the Commissioners of the planning short course to be held on Thursday, August 19 at the City of Woodinville.

SCHEDULING/TOPCIS FOR NEXT MEETING(S)

ADJOURN

Chair Snodgrass adjourned the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

Minutes Approved On:

Recording Secretary
